## ***Aster hallii*** Robins.

Hall's aster
Asteraceae (Aster Family)

**Status:** State Threatened
**Rank:** G4S1

**General Description:** Adapted from Douglas et al. (1998): A fibrous-rooted perennial 8 to 40 in. (20 to 100 cm) tall from a rhizome or short, thickened, woody caudex. The stem is pubescent at least above. The linear leaves are mostly entire and hairless to more or less pubescent. The lower leaves are usually oblanceolate, petiolate, and commonly deciduous except in smaller plants. The middle and upper leaves are sessile, linear to obovate or oval, ¾ to 4 in. (2 to 10 cm) long, and 1/16 to ¾ in. (2 to 20 mm) wide. The inflorescence is conspicuously divaricate-bracteate. There are one to many floral heads in the inflorescence with an involucre that is ¼ in. (5 to 7 mm) high, and has overlapping bracts, which are green-tipped, mostly obtuse or acutish and 2 to 4 times as long as wide. There are most often 15 to 40 white rays that are ¼ to 2/3 in. (5 to 15 mm) long.

**Identification Tips:** *Aster hallii* can be distinguished from the common *A. subspicatus, A. foliaceous*, and *A. occidentalis* by its strongly graduated involucre. The outer bracts of the involucre are also obtuse, markedly shorter than the inner, and not foliaceous. In the *Flora of the Pacific Northwest*, *A. hallii* is described as a subspecies of *A. chilensis (A. chilensis* spp. *hallii)*, along with ssp*. chilensis* and ssp. *ascendens*. To distinguish these subspecies (now described as full species) use the following characteristics: the inflorescence of *A. hallii* is conspicuously divaricate-bracteate, its bracts are mostly obtuse or acutish, 2 to 4 times as long as wide, and markedly acute, its rays are white, its leaves are linear, and its heads are generally smaller than in other subspecies. The inflorescence of *A. chilensis* and *A. ascendens* are not conspicuously divaricate-bracteate, their bracts, if present, are mostly erect, more than 4 times as long as wide, and markedly acute, their rays are usually blue or pinkish (sometimes white), and their leaves are linear or broader than *A. hallii.* Use of a technical key is necessary for correct identification.

**Phenology:** Flowers from July to October.

**Range:** Found in Oregon, and occasionally Thurston and Clark Counties, Washington.

**Habitat:** *Aster hallii* prefers dry, open places in valleys and plains. In Washington, this species has been seen in a wet remnant prairie in a floodplain.

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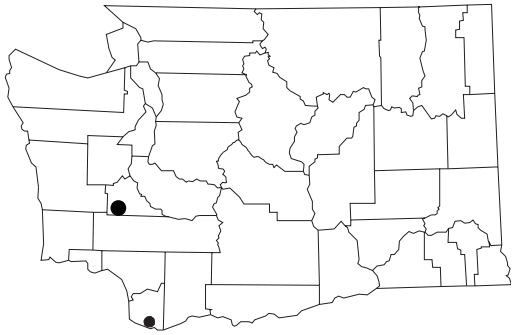
Illustration by John Rumley

Known distribution of *Aster hallii* in Washington



● Current (1980+)
◎ Historic (older than 1980)

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Photo by Julie Nelson

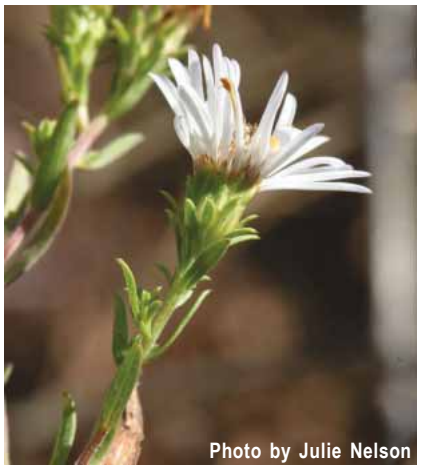
Photo by Julie Nelson


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**Ecology:** This taxon can be found at varying elevations in moist to dry areas of low to moderate disturbance.

**State Status Comments:** Known from two recent occurrences in Thurston and Clark counties. Very little information has been collected for this taxon.

**Inventory Needs:** Dry to moist prairies in Thurston and Clark Counties should be systematically surveyed for additional populations. Plant and habitat information should be compiled.

**Threats and Management Concerns:** Definite threats have not been identified for this species. However, the small number of known occurrences in Washington is a major concern. In general, prairies are threatened by natural succession, weed invasion, grazing, and agricultural and residential development.

**Comments:** This species is also know as *Aster chilensis* Nees ssp. *hallii* (Gray) Cronq., as it is listed in *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest* (Hitchcock et al. 1955) and as *Symphyotrichum hallii* (Gray) Nesom (USDA 2002).

**References:**

Douglas, G.W., G.B. Straley, D. Meidinger, and J. Pojar. 1998. *Illustrated Flora of British Columbia* vol. 1: *Gymnosperms and Dicotyledons*. Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks, Victoria, British Columbia. 436 pp.

Hitchcock, C.L., A. Cronquist, M. Ownbey, J.W. Thompson. 1955. *Vascular Plants of the Pacific Northwest* Part 5: *Compositae.* University of Washington Press, Seattle, WA. 343 pp.

USDA, NRCS. 2002. The PLANTS Database, Version 3.5 (http://plants.usda.gov). National Plant Data Center, Baton Rouge, LA 70874-4490 USA.

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